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LUNACY IN THE MIDST OF PLENTY

THE EDITORS

ON MARXISM: A Discussion

JOSEPH STAROBIN
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South from China

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EDITORS . . . LEO HUBERMAN . . . PAUL M. SWEEZY

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NOTES FROM THE EDITORS

In the July-August issue we said that this month's Review of the Month would probably be on the most recent civil liberties decisions of the Supreme Court. On further consideration, however, we decided to deal with the current economic situation instead—partly because an economic analysis was already overdue, but even more because we found that from a theoretical point of view we had little to add to what was said in "The Role of the Supreme Court" in the issue of September, 1957. The Court—or rather a minority of justices large enough to swing the whole Court—obviously bowed to reactionary political pressures. Sooner or later this was bound to happen unless there was effective counter-pressure from the liberal side, and the latter was simply not forthcoming. The moral is plain and it may be better to state it briefly than at length: we cannot expect the Supreme Court to make up for the lack of an effective political movement.

(*continued on inside back cover*)

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LUNACY IN THE MIDST OF PLENTY

The recession of 1957-1958 is over and the American economy is once again in the prosperity phase of the business cycle—"prosperity that looks like it is assuming boom proportions," said President Eisenhower not long before the beginning of the steel strike in July. The charts and statistics all agree. The recovery from the low point around the middle of 1958 has been sharp and general, and by the middle of 1959 most of the important economic indicators were well above their prerecession levels. Here is a list, comparing 1957 with the latest available data (taken from the July, 1959, issue of *Economic Indicators,* an official publication of the Council of Economic Advisers):

	1957	June 1959 (except as otherwise noted)	Percent increase
Gross National Product (billion dollars)	442.5	483.5[a]	9.3
Wages and salaries (billion dollars)	247.7	271.1	9.5
Proprietors' income[b] (billion dollars)	44.5	46.7	4.7
Dividends, rent, & interest (billion dollars)	43.5	47.3	8.9
Corporate profits (billion dollars)	43.3	46.5[c]	7.4
Industrial Production (1947-49=100)	143	155	8.4
Civilian employment (million workers)	65.0	67.3	3.5

a. Second quarter, 1959
b. Including farm
c. First quarter, 1959

These figures are certainly impressive, and many will doubtless

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find them reassuring, especially when it is emphasized that they compare the present situation not with the bottom of the recession but with the peak of the previous upswing. And yet the economic situation has other, less comforting aspects. For one thing, other series besides incomes, production, and employment have also shown increases during this period. To the above list we may add the following:

	1957	June 1959	Percent increase
Consumer prices (1947-49=100)	120.2	124.5	3.6[a]
Wholesale prices (1947-49=100)	117.6	119.3	1.4[a]
Unemployment (million workers)	2.9	4.0	37.9
Unemployment (percent of labor force)	4.3	4.9[b]	13.9

a. Prices increased in *both* 1958 and the first half of 1959.
b. Seasonally adjusted. The unadjusted percentage was 5.6, which means an increase over 1957 of approximately 30 percent.

What these figures signify is that the recession did not succeed in halting inflation, and that up to the middle of 1959 the recovery was still far short of reducing the unemployment rate to the already high level of 1957. It follows from the price data, of course, that the increases of income indicated in the earlier table are considerably less impressive than at first sight they appear to be.

Unfortunately, continued inflation and heavy unemployment—which it used to be thought were as incompatible as fire and water—are not the only negative aspects of the present situation. There is also the obvious dependence of the upswing on a disproportionate and manifestly unsustainable growth of private investment. From the low point of the recession in the first quarter of 1958 to the second quarter of 1959, personal consumption plus government purchases of goods and services (together constituting what may be called the final demand for goods and services) grew much more slowly than investment (which is essentially provision of capacity to produce or deliver goods and services). This is shown in our next table:

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	1st quarter 1958	2nd quarter 1959	percent increase
Final demand for goods and services (billion dollars, annual rate)	376.6	409.3	8.7
Investment (billion dollars, annual rate)[a]	54.4	74.2	36.4

a. Gross domestic investment plus net foreign investment

If we examine the expansion of investment more closely we find overwhelming evidence of its unstable and unsustainable character. Of the approximately $20 billion (annual rate) growth between the first quarter of 1958 and the second quarter of 1959, almost $16 billion represented a change from a rapid draining of inventories to an even more rapid building up of inventories. Quite apart from the fact that much of the inventory accumulation of the first half of 1959 was in anticipation of the steel strike, it is obvious to everyone that these inventory movements—both up and down—are self-limiting and in the long run largely mutually compensating. Even in the short run, moreover, a resumption of inventory accumulation at the pre-strike rate seems most unlikely, from which we may conclude that unless investment in plant and equipment picks up quickly and sharply, the economy may already have reached pretty near the top of the current upswing. In due course—recent experience suggests some time in 1961—inventory accumulation will again give way to inventory liquidation, and we shall be in another recession.

Even this, however, does not exhaust the negative aspects of the present situation. From our point of view, indeed, even if not from the point of view of those who take the capitalist system for granted, it hardly introduces the subject.

The shocking fact is that despite superficial appearance of "prosperity," *the American economy is in a profound state of stagnation.* Perhaps even more shocking is that few people are aware of it and even fewer seem to give a damn.

Unused manpower and idle productive capacity are to be found everywhere in the American economy.

Official unemployment figures only begin to tell the story of unused manpower. Short time and irregularity of work from week to week or month to month account for an enormous loss of productive potential. Millions of people who would jump at the chance to work

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in the right jobs and under suitable conditions—for example, mothers with small children for whom no decent care system exists—are not in the labor market and hence are not even counted as unemployed. In addition, of course, further millions of people are engaged in work which, in technical economic terminology, yields a net social product which is very small and in many cases actually negative. For example, about half of those employed in agriculture are redundant and would be much better off in decent industrial jobs. And only think of how many workers could be released from our swollen apparatus of salesmanship and finance without the slightest social loss!

Alongside this great pool of unused and abused manpower, there stands an even more impressive accumulation of idle or underutilized productive capacity. The conservative Brookings Institution estimated that in 1929, at the peak of the boom of the 1920s, American industry was running at only about 80 percent of capacity. No one with the necessary resources seems interested in making a similar study of the situation today, but what indications there are all point to an even lower rate of utilization. The steel industry, in a "Facts for Management" brochure, gives the following figures on steel capacity and production during the 1950s (we have added the third column showing production as a percentage of capacity):

	Capacity as of Jan. 1 (million tons)	Production (million tons)	Production as percent of capacity
1950	99.4	96.8	98
1955	125.8	117.0	93
1956	128.4	115.2	90
1957	133.5	112.7	85
1958	140.7	85.3	60
1959	147.6	—	—

Note that while capacity continued to climb, production declined not only in the recession year of 1958 but also in the boom years of 1956 and 1957. During the first half of 1959, to be sure, production increased sharply to an annual rate of 129 million tons, or approximately 87 percent of capacity. But everyone agrees that much of this was in anticipation of the steel strike, and it now seems doubtful—quite apart from the effects of the strike itself—whether for the year as a whole an operating rate as high as 75 percent will be achieved.

The situation in automobiles is similar, though probably worse.

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In 1955 the industry produced nearly 8 million cars and could certainly have gone higher if the demand had been there. Since then, enormous amounts have been invested each year in adding to and modernizing plant and equipment. It seems on the safe side to say that the industry has a capacity of at least 9 million cars today. Against this should be put the current rate of production—6.7 million (annual rate) during the first half of 1959. Here again an operating rate of 75 percent seems, if anything, to overstate the actual achievement of the industry in this prosperity-turning-to-boom year of 1959.

There is no reason to assume that steel and automobiles are exceptional. On the contrary, there is every reason to assume that they are typical. There may be a few industries here and there that are operating at or near capacity, but *they* are the exceptions, not the industries that are wallowing in excess capacity. This is frankly admitted by knowledgeable observers of the economic scene when it suits their purpose. In an article published a week before the beginning of the steel strike ("Labor: A New 'Era of Bad Feeling'?", *New York Times Magazine,* July 5), A. H. Raskin, the *Times's* extremely able chief labor correspondent, had the following to say:

> Perhaps most disquieting of all in the considerations making for an upsurge in strikes is the fantastic productivity of our industrial machine and our inability to find markets here and abroad for all we can produce. Our steel mills can fill in nine or ten months all our annual requirements for domestic or export use. We are similarly over-endowed with capacity to make automobiles, washing machines, refrigerators, lamps, television sets, ships, railroad cars and a thousand other items for which there is need in an under-endowed world—but too few buyers.
>
> This is the kind of problem that requires the collective and cooperative best judgment of government, industry and labor for solution, not the use of strikes as a periodic device for draining inventories and thus keeping prices artificially high. Otherwise, as the miracles of pushbutton production open the way to a limitless expansion of living standards for ourselves and the world, we will turn to the type of calculated lunacy we already follow in maintaining artificial farm prices.

It is a little hard to follow Mr. Raskin's reasoning that we are in danger of *turning to* a type of calculated lunacy to maintain industrial prices. What does he think the present system is? According to his own testimony, production is held far below capacity because of a shortage of markets (at current prices of course!) and strikes

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are periodically provoked in order to clean up any inventories that may nevertheless inconveniently accumulate. From the point of view of the vast majority of mankind that lives in the under-endowed parts of the world, this may well sound sufficiently calculated and sufficiently lunatic to satisfy the most exacting standards.

To be sure, this is not the way things look to the men who are responsible for establishing and carrying out the policy of restricting output and maintaining prices. Their business is not to endow the world but to make profits, and they do very well at it. Data for the second quarter of 1959 are not yet available at the time of writing, but there seems to be no doubt among those who keep close track of such things that when the figures have been toted up they will easily set a new all-time record. As the businessman sees matters, this is the very opposite of lunacy, and the American people as a whole have been so thoroughly indoctrinated with the businessman's point of view that they apparently agree. Hence all the enthusiastic self-congratulation on prosperity turning to boom—at the very time when the untapped potential of the economy may well have reached a new high!

Mr. Raskin, of course, has a remedy—"the collective and cooperative best judgment of government, industry and labor." Just what this best judgment is, however, he fails to tell us. He also fails to tell us how to find out what it is, or even how we can be sure it exists. In the absence of such information, we may perhaps be pardoned for expressing a certain skepticism. Labor and industry have not been notable for their agreements on such issues as prices and wages—as the current steel strike eloquently testifies—and it is most unlikely that their collective best judgment on what to do about the coexistence of too much capacity and too few markets would add up to anything more than another disagreement. Mr. Raskin's "solution" looks rather like the familiar "statesmanlike" formula for avoiding the issue and leaving bad enough alone.*

* A classic example of this is provided by the following, taken from Senator Wiley's "Individual Views" appended to the Kefauver Committee's report on administered prices in the steel industry: "Whether price leadership in an industry where there are a few big concerns is an evil and what can be done about it if it is," said the Senator from Wisconsin, "is one of those questions which only the combined thinking of all men of good will can solve." While all men of good will are thinking about the matter, U. S. Steel is busy leading the pack up the price escalator. (*Administered Prices: Steel,* Report of the Committee on the Judiciary, U. S. Senate, made by its Subcommittee on Antitrust and Monopoly pursuant to S. Res. 57, as extended, 85th Cong., 1st Sess., March 13, 1958, Government Printing Office, no price given, p. 204.)

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Actually, if we clear our minds of cant and cut through the fog of interested propaganda, there is no mystery at all about what is required to put our resources to work producing the things so desperately needed by an under-endowed world (including a large proportion of our own population, whatever the celebrators of affluence may say). Where there is excess capacity, prices should be slashed; and as a new pattern of expanded demand develops there should be genuine and effective planning to provide the kinds and quantities of investment and the relative prices in relation to costs that would ensure the optimum and stable growth of the American economy. Given such a program, the United States would show the world for the first time something of the real potentialities of modern science and technology. And the American people would learn, also for the first time, what kind of prosperity they have been enjoying under the benevolent rule of giant corporations bent on maximizing their profits at any cost.

Unfortunately, we are not likely to set the world an example or learn the truth about ourselves in any near future. The men of Big Business are firmly in the saddle, and the last things they want are lower prices and genuine economic planning. They don't even want rapid and stable growth, at any rate not unless it comes as a by-product of their hunt for maximum profits—which will happen on the same day that Mr. Khrushchev's shrimps begin to whistle. Their attitude was well expressed by one of their most eminent representatives, Clarence B. Randall, former Chairman of the Inland Steel Company and a frequent adviser of the present administration in Washington. Arguing against the Harvard economist Sumner Slichter, who holds that the United States can achieve a reasonable rate of economic growth only at the cost of continuous inflation, Mr. Randall had the following to say:

> These startling conclusions of my eminent friend, which cause me such distress of mind, come about, it seems to me, because he is reasoning backwards from false premises. He has established in his own mind a target pattern for the future expansion of our economy, and is determined that we shall not fall short of what he terms our potential.
>
> Having fixed that arbitrary goal, he searches for the economic tools that will take us to that objective, and selects the continuance of the wage-cost-price spiral as the least objectionable.
>
> Now, with deep respect, I would have to say that no man living can determine what is the true potential of the American

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economy, nor what is the optimum rate of expansion. That is the jargon of authoritarianism, whereas it is the very essence of freedom that the progress of our economy should be unpredictable.

Our system of private enterprise, which reflects the countless decisions of the entire population, can never be put in a straitjacket. (*Chicago Sunday Tribune Magazine,* June 7, 1959.)

This is the true language of capitalism: every man for himself and to hell with targets, potentials, arbitrary goals, and all the other nefarious devices of the authoritarian devil. How long will it take the people of the United States to learn what most of the rest of the world already knows, that it is also the language of lunacy?

(August 15, 1959)

ON MARXISM: A DISCUSSION

(1) JOSEPH R. STAROBIN

The most stimulating feature of Paul Baran's two essays, "On the Nature of Marxism," (MR, October and November, 1958) lies in how contradictory they are. He has attempted to square Marxian doctrine with some of the realities of contemporary capitalism without reappraising that doctrine—in fact, all the while insisting that no revisions are needed even if events have turned out quite differently than Marx and Engels expected. His is a virtuoso performance in stating the real dilemmas and evading the same.

Professor Baran's most crucial acknowledgement is that "the general standard of living has risen considerably and the working class is now in a markedly better position than it was, say, at the outset of capitalism's current monopolistic phase." This abandons, of course, the impoverishment doctrine which was to be, in the classic Marxian schema, the generator of revolutionary change.

Joseph Starobin, well known editor and foreign correspondent, is the author of Eyewitness in Indo-China *and* From Paris to Peking.

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Yet no sooner is this admission made than Baran recoils from its implications. He attributes the absence of revolutionary will in the Western proletariat to the power of bourgeois ideology which, he says, Marx and Engels also miscalculated. The masses have succumbed, it seems, not only to the half-truth but the total lie, and this is why history has missed the socialist bus.

It is hard to see why so much is made of this point. For if material conditions have in fact improved, why seek extraordinary explanations in the realm of ideological deception? Either things are bad and the deception of the masses is real, or the improvement in conditions is real, in which case why the deception?

What are we left with as a motive force of social change? At one point, Baran suggests that "what Marx misjudged . . . is the intensity and the speed with which the irrationality of capitalism would give rise to a movement powerful enough to carry out a socialist transformation of society." The inference here is that those who only sit and wait may also serve. With the passage of time, conditions will deteriorate and the impoverishment that would generate revolutionary consciousness will be reinstated.

But in another part of his essays, Baran shifts the terrain and considers it "myopic and parochial" to judge the prospects of socialism simply in terms of its disappointments in the West. Leadership is passing to other peoples who will soon "set the tone" of world development, and "the countries of monopoly capital will first lag behind, and then eventually be swayed by the forces of example, and by the slow but irresistible process of osmosis. . . ."

This latter thought, as I have suggested elsewhere,* is a very productive one. The evidence grows all around us that competitive coexistence is bound to be a factor forcing the West into new orbits. It may be added that "osmosis" will surely be a two-way process, and the peoples now industrializing under Communist leadership are likely to be profoundly influenced by competition with the West. Orthodox Marxist-Leninists, however, will hardly accept this concept of "osmosis" as a substitute for impoverishment. They view it as one of the Lorelei songs of "modern revisionism."

Many MR readers will recall that in his recent book, *The Political Economy of Growth,* Baran criticizes those whom he aptly calls

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* *The American Socialist,* February 1958.

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the "agnostic apologists" of capitalism, those who know better than they admit and refuse to face up to the implications of what they know. Baran seems to be an agnostic of another sort, an agnostic "revisionist." His analysis of contemporary history leads him to reappraise Marxian doctrine, though this is exactly what he hesitates to do. This dilemma is expressed most clearly in a single paragraph, the one in which he writes that many aspects of Western development "do not correspond to what is usually considered Marxian doctrine," whereupon he continues that "nothing would be more fallacious than to conclude from it that they have rendered Marxism an obsolete or a misleading body of thought." One is reminded of Pascal who, when asked his opinion of Christianity, replied: "It is unbelievable; therefore I believe."

Is there any way forward from this dilemma? I think it lies in Baran's own redefinition of Marxism which makes it not a dogma, nor a "positive science," but "an intellectual attitude, a way of thought, a philosophical position the fundamental principle of which is the continuous, systematic and comprehensive confrontation of reality with reason."

Let us agree on this excellent point of departure. But if reality is to be confronted with reason, why maintain that while "modern capitalism has obviously undergone a number of important changes" the "more it changes, the more it remains the same?" Is this really true?

Granted that the remarkable increase of social wealth, the growth of productive and technological forces (as Baran emphasizes) does not get used as rationally as it should be; granted also that there is a deliberate obsolescence, a gigantic waste, a tendency toward stagnation. Does that settle the hash?

Perhaps it is also true that in antagonism to these phenomena there is an enormous pressure at work for the creative and constructive use of society's surplus, a pressure which brings into play society's *public power* and forces the utilization of at least some part of the surplus in the *public interest?*

A basic reason why material conditions have improved may lie in the fact that despite the aggregate deadweight and drawback of private and irresponsible forces at work (as analyzed and admitted by C. Wright Mills and A. A. Berle, Jr.) the public power continues to grow stronger. True, as Baran would reply, the waste and obsolescence

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are governmentally-stimulated, as for example, in armaments; yet it is also true that the social surplus does get a growing use in the common interest. And this is bound to accelerate. As Paul Sweezy has often pointed out, the surplus grows at such a rate that it would require a fantastic rate of waste to absorb it, and this impossibility itself compels a greatly accelerated governmental intervention to give it a more rational use.

The hold of bourgeois ideology to which Baran attributes such mysterious strength is perhaps only the reflection of the seriousness and vigor with which the great majority of Americans take the *democratic idea* and use it to demand a decisive role for the public power in the public interest. This is one of the great changes in the American mentality over the past quarter of a century. It has become a force in itself as strong as the socialist consciousness that was supposed to be a revolutionary factor in the classic Marxian anticipation.

To be sure, Baran and others who share his dilemmas will reply that "the government in capitalist society is incapable, however, of purposeful employment of the economic surplus for the advancement of human welfare. The powerful capitalist interests by which it is controlled, as well as its social and ideological make-up, renders such a policy impossible." Granted the kernel of truth in this, has it not been oversimplified to the point of defying reason?

If the state power is so automatically and unconditionally dominated by capitalists, quite helplessly straitjacketed by their ideology and social makeup, then why do they complain that the public power escapes their control, and assumes an independence to take up policies which plainly counter their particular interests? Instead of viewing the state power simply as a defensive mechanism of the system, why not examine its dynamic, the way it changes under the impact of an ever-calculated growth of the economic surplus?

In his book, cited above, Baran acknowledges that even capitalist societies (and the men shaped by them) are capable of rational behavior in a time of overriding crisis, only to relapse when the crisis is over. But we are living through a century of crisis, in which the socializing factors of society are in conflict with the outmoded institutions and ways of thought from which they emerge. It would follow, from his own insight, that a relatively rational behavior is possible. While it does take some doing, it is not *a priori* impossible. This leads, however, to a conception of social change quite different from the

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spectacular and apocalyptic vision which classic Marxism held out to its followers.

If there are no other viable clues to the historical process, then they lie exactly where dogma has forbidden those who want to confront reality with reason to enter.

Competition with a rival social order accelerates the process of forcing a degree of rationality in the midst of irrationality. Capitalism's tendencies to externalize its inner difficulties by world war are being stalemated; the growth of productive forces, and with them a large social surplus, compels an increase in the socializing elements of the society, whatever the obstacle of private controls; the consciousness is growing that to compete effectively with a rival system, the ways of thought and policies and institutions of capitalism need to be revamped. As J. K. Galbraith points out in *The Affluent Society,* the force of "circumstance" uproots the most entrenched habits even while a hypocritical tribute continues to be paid to the old shibboleths.

The "osmosis" which Baran anticipates is already at work. It coincides with the factors of rationality already growing with the system. This is, to be sure, not an automatic process, for men make their own history. But to the degree that socialists (and for that matter non-socialists) grasp the new reality at work, abandoning whatever is obsolete and misleading in their various dogmas, to that degree their reason and their action can be effective.

(2) STANLEY MOORE

My comments will be restricted to the second of Paul Baran's articles, the one entitled "On the Nature of Marxism," which appeared in MONTHLY REVIEW for November of 1958. In spite of my high regard for the author, I strongly disagree with the thesis he officially defends there. And though unofficially he retreats to a milder position, I disagree with that too.

Stanley Moore, formerly professor of philosophy at Reed College, is the author of The Critique of Capitalist Democracy: An Introduction to the Theory of the State in Marx, Engels, and Lenin.

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Baran starts out by labeling a "serious misconception" the view that Marxism is a set of factual statements. Actually, he asserts, it is an "intellectual attiude" (paragraphs 1-2). Marxism is *not* A: instead it *is* B. Such is the thesis he sets out to defend.

This thesis is indefensible, and in Section II Baran admits as much. He writes there that Marx discovered a law of historical development (paragraph 2), that Marx formulated a general theory, analyzed the laws of motion of capitalist society, and spent the greater part of his life on detailed empirical research (paragraph 3). So what becomes of the bald assertion that Marxism is *not* a set of factual statements? The "serious misconception" turns out to be correct after all.

It becomes apparent in Section II that Baran is actually defending a more modest thesis than the one he first advanced. He now admits that Marxism is *both* a set of factual statements *and* an attitude, but argues that the attitude is more important than the statements. This is a more defensible position, I admit. Yet I do not find his arguments at all convincing.

In Section I, Baran identifies the Marxian "intellectual attitude" with what he takes to be the Marxian philosophical position. This position, as he states it (paragraph 1), is indistinguishable from the positions of the philosophers attacked by Marx and Engels in *The Holy Family* and *The German Ideology*. It was precisely the lack of *factual content* that Marx and Engels criticized in the brothers Bauer, the "True Socialists," and their like. Marx and Engels started out as philosophers. But after 1846 the vast preponderance of their work was in the positive social sciences—economics, history, and political theory. The evidence is overwhelming that they considered themselves as contributing, not to philosophy, but to science. (See, for example, Marx and Engels, *The German Ideology,* pt. 1, sec. 1, para. 26; Engels, *Anti-Dühring,* ch. 1, paras. 15-18; Engels, *Feuerbach,* ch. 4. para. 26.)

In Section II Baran shifts from contrasting philosophical and scientific to contrasting critical and positive. But the argument that Marx was not primarily an economist because his works on political economy contain the word "critique" in their titles is not convincing. *The Holy Family* and *The German Ideology* are sub-titled in the same way. Does it follow that Marx was not primarily a philosopher either? If we look at what Marx actually does in his critiques of political economy, we find that he seeks, first, to expose the fetishistic errors of previous theories, in terms of logic and evidence, and second, to replace

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their incorrect factual statements by correct ones. His aim in *Capital,* as he tells us in his Preface to the first edition, is to lay bare the economic law of motion of modern society. Is it a "serious misconception" to regard that law as a statement about facts—past, present, and future?

In Section III the rabbit appears from the hat. *None* of Marx's conclusions has been vitiated, let alone refuted, by subsequent events (paragraph 1). What is meant here by "conclusions"? Does the section on the "Historical Tendency of Capitalist Accumulation" at the end of the first volume of *Capital* state any conclusions? Do these conclusions include a prediction of increasing misery? Or are Marx's *only* conclusions his beliefs, first, that capitalism is irrational and, second, that it is doomed? If it boils down to this, then none of Bakunin's conclusions has been refuted either, for he shared these beliefs with Marx.

In my opinion a theorist should be judged, not simply in terms of his conclusion, but in terms of all his statements taken as a connected whole. A fool may reach a correct conclusion by accident—particularly if the conclusion is general enough. What makes a theorist is the quality of his factual and logical statements, his evidence and argument.

I certainly don't deny that attitudes are important, and I certainly don't claim that they are reducible to beliefs about facts. But I do hold that the most effective way to *change* attitudes is that of adding to or altering beliefs about facts. How can a Marxian theorist convince people that capitalism is irrational? By describing facts, analyzing their interconnection, and tracing the consequences of alternative lines of action. That is what Marx did. And that is what Baran did in *The Political Economy of Growth* and in the first article of this series.

Marxism, I contend, is *primarily* a set of factual and logical statements contained in the writings of Marx and his followers—some incontestably true, some incontestably false, and others as yet neither decisively refuted nor decisively confirmed. To be a Marxist is to believe that this set of statements includes a higher proportion which are true than does any rival set. To be a Marxian theorist is to contribute to the expansion of the subset consisting of statements which are true and to the rejection of the subset consisting of statements which are false.

The recurrent quarrels of dogmatists and revisionists are wasted words in proportion to the participants' refusal to engage in a careful,

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detailed, step-by-step confrontation of theory with reality. Science is *knowledge* which is *incomplete*. Revisionists, in reducing science to method, forget that it is knowledge. Their theoretical inheritance is ignored. Dogmatists, in exalting science to omniscience, forget that it is incomplete. Their theoretical inheritance is enshrined. Marxism is *usable* only as an organized set of factual statements, continually tested, corrected, and expanded through logical analysis and empirical investigation. "But," wrote Lenin, "inasmuch as the criterion of practice, that is, the course of development of *all* capitalist countries in recent decades, proves only the objective truth of Marx's social and economic theory *as a whole,* and not the objective truth of every part and every formulation, to talk of the 'dogmatism' of Marxists is to make an unpardonable concession to bourgeois economics. The sole conclusion to be drawn from the opinion of Marxists that Marx's theory is objectively true is that by following the *path* of Marxian theory we shall approximate more and more to objective truth (without ever exhausting it), but by following *any other path* we shall arrive at nothing but muddles and lies." *(Materialism and Empirio-Criticism,* ch. 2, last paragraph.)

Surely this was the position of the economist Baran in *The Political Economy of Growth.* I hope that some day it will become the position of the philosopher Baran as well.

A REPLY

BY PAUL A. BARAN

Stanley Moore's and Joseph Starobin's comments on my October-November (1958) essays in MONTHLY REVIEW differ so much in their basic premises, quality, and contents that I would find it most difficult to deal with both within the confines of a necessarily short reply.

Moore's commentary represents a valuable contribution to the discussion which my articles were intended to stimulate, and I have no hesitation about admitting that his strictures on some of my too-

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sketchy and too-hasty formulations are wholly justified. At the same time, however, I continue to adhere to my earlier expressed conviction that Marxism is *not* "primarily a set of factual and logical statements," but is *primarily* "an intellectual attitude, a way of thought, a philosophical position," the validity of which does *not* depend on any particular set of factual statements made by Marx, Engels, or Lenin. Thus Marx's view of the irrational and conflict-laden nature of the capitalist system—arrived at as a result of his effort to pierce the fetishistic, ideological fog which obscures capitalist reality—is not in the slightest shaken, let alone refuted, by such facts as the change in the character and causes of depressions and unemployment, or even the manifest absence of progressive impoverishment of the working class. All that these *facts* prove is that the irrationality of capitalism assumes different forms in different historical periods, and that it is incumbent upon Marxists today to apply indefatigably Marx's method of demonstration and analysis of this irrationality regardless of the area or way in which it manifests itself most strikingly at any given time. Moreover, I cannot agree with Moore that "Marxism is usable only as an organized set of factual statements," and submit instead that it is precisely in transcending what can be encompassed by a "set of factual statements" that Marxism radically differs from bourgeois scientism and positivism of all shades. For what is, in my opinion, central to the Marxian position is the capacity and willingness to look beyond the immediately observable facts and to see the tree of the future in the tiny shoots barely perceptible in the present. It is the combination of historical vision and the courage to be utopian—with the vision sternly disciplined by an analysis of *tendencies* discernible at the present time, and with the utopia rendered concrete by the identification of the *social forces* that may be expected to further its realization. And, incidentally, it is in the realism of his vision and the specificity of his utopia that Marx differed from the "True Socialists," the brothers Bauer, Bakunin, and the anarchists, to whom Moore refers. But important as all of these questions are to the future development of Marxism, and to the indispensable and urgent struggle against currently rampant attempts at its falsification and liquidation, I am inclined to believe that my disagreement with Moore represents a "family quarrel" the resolution of which, far from calling for divorce proceedings, may be safely entrusted to further discussion and further reflection.

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When it comes to Starobin, the situation is quite different. His statement, in no way advancing our understanding of what is being discussed, reflects merely the musings of a man who has broken with the cause of socialism and is groping for a formula which would somehow rationalize his seeking to join what C. Wright Mills so aptly calls the "great American celebration." Since for reasons that are only too obvious there are many these days who may be impressed by Starobin's arguments, it is necessary to have a closer look at his position in order to see what merit, if any, they can possibly claim.

One of the main themes of Starobin's new philosophy concerns the outlook for the stability of capitalism. In meditating on this undoubtedly important problem he has got into the habit of taking a remark of mine (in *The Political Economy of Growth,* p. 30) as his point of departure, and has referred to me in this connection as follows: "He points out that in times of war or great emergency, 'objective needs become recognized as fully ascertainable and are assigned a significance vastly superior to that of individual preferences. . . .' But, he continues, 'as soon as the emergency passes, and further admission of the existence and identifiability of objective reason threatens to become a source of dangerous social criticism, bourgeois thought hastily retreats from whatever advanced positions it may have temporarily reached, and lapses once more into its customary state of agnosticism.'" To this passage Starobin then appends two rhetorical questions: "Yet suppose our present political crisis is prolonged and becomes more complex, amounting to an emergency? Will not a certain degree of 'objective reason' force its way through the barriers of society so that rational solutions can pervade an increasing part of it, and are not easily banished?"*

I submit that these two questions, which Starobin apparently considers to be closely interrelated, actually have nothing to do with each other, and furthermore that had Starobin made an effort to understand my statement from which he quotes, instead of misrepresenting it, he might have saved himself and his readers all the confusion which his questions reflect. For what I advance in the passage at issue is not only quite different from what one might deduce from Starobin's account, but, while bearing some relation to his first question, has no connection with the second. Here is what I said: "In times of war,

* "Capitalism, Socialism, and Economic Growth," *The American Socialist,* August 1957.

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when victory becomes the dominant interest of the dominant class, *what under the circumstances constitutes objecive reason* is permitted to ride roughshod over particular interests and subjective utilities. Whether it is compulsory service in the armed forces, war economic controls, or requisition and confiscation of necessary supplies, objective needs become recognized as fully ascertainable and are assigned a significance vastly superior to that of individual preferences revealed by market behavior." (Italics added.) It is quite clear that what I was talking about is a *war economy* in which the government of a capitalist country, guided by the interests of the capitalist class *as a whole* (which in certain historical constellations may even coincide with the interests of the nation as a whole), for the sake of winning the war suppresses the divergent interests of various groups and layers of the capitalist class, as well as those of the trade unions and of the underlying population at large, in order to carry out measures dictated by military necessities. What Starobin suggests (in his first question, and again in his remarks in this issue of MR) is that inasmuch as "our present political crisis is prolonged and becomes more complex, amounting to an emergency," the government could enforce indefinitely something like a war economy, i.e. a system of political, fiscal, and administrative measures assuring a wartime level of employment and a wartime volume of output.

Does it really need to be stressed that expressions such as "permanent emergency," "war economy in peacetime," and the like, are nothing but "cute" paradoxes covering up a lack of rigorous analysis rather than summarizing its results? For if it is to be assumed that the cold war is here to stay for an indefinite—or at least very long—period of time, and that it would give rise to the establishment and maintenance of a war economy also for an indefinite period of time, then there is no point in talking about a state of emergency. Under such circumstances, we would be confronted not with an exceptional situation, with a brief and passing "spasm," but with a new phase of historical development, with a far-reaching transformation of the capitalist order.

What would be the principal features of such a permanent "war capitalism"? First and foremost: the absorption of a large (and probably rising) share of national resources by the military establishment. And concomitantly and inevitably, a strengthening of the sway of the state over society as a whole, an expansion of the monopolistic sector

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of the economy (in keeping with the needs of the military), a corresponding curtailment of "old-fashioned" competition, and a system of comprehensive controls over the output, investment, wage, and price policies of capitalist enterprise.

One need not be a Marxist but merely a half-way competent bourgeois social scientist to realize the host of prohibitive perplexities with which such a system would be inescapably beset. The growing monopolization of the economy would steadily augment the proportion of the economic surplus in national output. With the war remaining cold, the continuous waste of surplus on the upkeep of a gluttonous and manifestly superfluous military establishment would become increasingly absurd and therefore increasingly difficult. At the same time, retaining the decisive characteristic of capitalism—private property over the means of production—"war capitalism," like the preceding forms of capitalism, would inevitably and incessantly generate and regenerate private, antagonistic interests, only now more concentrated and more powerful than ever before and thus even more capable of controlling the state and of making it subservient to the requirements of whatever monopolistic group might happen to be dominant at any given time.

Not even the most complacent apologist of a "new capitalism" would be guilty of mistaking the glittering facade of such an armaments-induced prosperity, which is continually threatening to collapse or to explode into a thermonuclear holocaust, for the foundations of strength and stability of a viable and progressive economic system. On that matter any stalwart Chamber of Commerce spokesman or any commentator of *Business Week* or the *Wall Street Journal* is a more reliable guide than Starobin, who is still rubbing his eyes after making the startling discovery that capitalism goes not only through phases of stagnation and depression but also, and in particular after wars, through periods of boom and inflation. Little as I, for one, agree with the theoretical positions of Strachey and Galbraith, who seem to have displaced the earlier idols in Starobin's intellectual temple, I must say in all fairness to them that they stand miles above this kind of socio-economic "analysis."

But it takes indeed all of Starobin's acquired Power of Positive Thinking to discern in the "war capitalism" nothing less than "rational solutions pervading an increasing part of society," "socializing factors," and "advances of public power." Could there be a more striking

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demonstration of theoretical muddle than considering every increment in state power and every improvement in technical efficiency—irrespective of the class character of the state and of the ends which this efficiency serves—as a sign of a better society? It surely does not call for a Herculean effort at dialectical thinking to realize that an increase in the efficiency of the distribution of comic books among children is no more an advance in education than the systematic destruction of food and limitation of agricultural production is progress in the direction of economic planning. The proverbial Social Democratic philistine in Germany who celebrated every new public pissoir as a step towards socialism was a paragon of insight and well-meaning concern with public welfare compared with one whose philosophy must lead him, however unintentionally, to applaud every newly constructed base for the launching of intercontinental ballistic missiles as a most desirable expansion of "public power."

There are other elements in Starobin's "new look," but none of them, alas, rises above the level of the shallowest liberal claptrap. Thus, pleased with the "seriousness and vigor with which the great majority of Americans take the democratic idea," he announces that "this is one of the great changes in the American mentality over the past quarter of a century." What is there to be said about an understanding of history which lumps together into one "quarter of a century" the 1930s of the New Deal, of CIO, of TVA, with the late 1940s and the late 1950s of the witch hunts, of reaction, of conformism and of cold war? Or what is one to think of a social theory which for a meaningful notion of the social and political dominance of monopoly capital substitutes the "concept" of "the aggregate deadweight and drawback of private and irresponsible forces at work"?

At some point Starobin inquires whether I suggest that "those who only sit and wait may also serve." I would not say that. But I have strong suspicion that they may serve better than those who commit to print undigested ruminations and thereby contribute to the prevailing confusion and strengthen the "public power" of fuzziness and ignorance.

We feel little confidence in the counsel of those persons, including clergymen, who suggest that the brute in man can be unleashed in an emergency, and then, when the crisis is past, he will automatically become a civilized being again and exercise full moral self-restraint.

—American Friends Service Committee, *Speak Truth To Power.*

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SOUTH FROM CHINA

BY KEITH M. BUCHANAN

The last lap of my China travels took me to Nanning, in the Chuang Autonomous Region of south China. The Chinese-Vietnamese border lay only one hundred miles to the south, and when the opportunity of a brief visit to North Vietnam was offered to me I eagerly accepted. Few Western observers had visited the country since the restoration of peace; moreover, Vietnam was of major interest to me as a geographer because its great rice growing area in the Red River Lowland is a classic example of the intensive agriculture of East Asia and because the country illustrates on a smaller scale the problems and difficulties China faced five or six years ago.

I boarded the train at Nanning at the uncomfortable hour of half-past three in the morning and woke to find the train winding south through a sunlit landscape of tawny grass and low scrub, stippled with small villages and patches of cropland and broken by massive grey crags of limestone. At 10 o'clock I was on the southern frontier of China, changed trains (for there is a break of gauge at the frontier) and shortly after reached Langson, the first station in Vietnam.

A background of shrilling cicadas, of banana fronds, and tiny rice fields; on the platform, slender dark-eyed children selling fruit and sugar cane; smart Polish and Indian officers and Canadian observers of the United Nation Control Commission; a small group of Russian technicians and their families; Vietnamese students returning from Peking and Moscow; in the distance a burnt out building and the ruins of a French pill box—all these things suggested the character and problems of life in Vietnam, its tropical climate and gentle peoples, its recent emergence from a bitter colonial war, its partition at the end of this war, the international supervision of the armistice by United Nations observers, the reconstruction of the country carried through with the help of technicians and funds from the Sino-Soviet bloc.

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Into the Red River Lowland

Like so much of the material equipment of Vietnamese life, the rail line towards Hanoi had been destroyed in the war against France. It had been restored only a few months ago and was a major artery between China and this newly emergent state. The train crept southward between high hills, covered with scrub and forest and dotted with small thatched villages, with tiny patches of rice and maize, of fruit trees and sugar cane. It was an area obviously thinly peopled, inhabited mainly by tribal groups. Then, as the afternoon drew on, the blue, forested hills receded into the distance and the great alluvial lowland of the Red River stretched to the horizon—mile after mile of green and pale gold ricefields, of fields newly ploughed or filmed with irrigation water, tiny fields bounded by dykes or ditches, and patterned by the toil of half a hundred generations of farming folk. As we passed over the Red River into Hanoi, children were leading the buffaloes down to the red mud-laden waters, russet-clad peasants were working in the fields of sugar cane and vegetables, and the fishing boats were spreading their sails to the evening breeze and drifting seawards like clouds of butterflies.

Hanoi—Wooden Clogs and Modern Factories

Hanoi is a beautiful city, a city of wide tree-lined avenues and graceful French colonial architecture, of houses painted pastel yellow and pale green and pink with spacious gardens and balconies. It is a city of vivid colors and scents and sounds—the magenta and emerald green and white silk of the girls' tunics, the cascading scarlet of bougainvillea, the russet brown of the peasants' dress, the gold skins and blue-black long hair of the children, the scent of evening sunlight on the hot earth mingled with the scents of spices and cooking, the sounds of wooden clogs clip-clopping through the morning streets, the harsh cries of the street vendors and the soft swish of the street cleaners' brooms.

It is also a city which is undergoing a major social and economic transformation. Formerly, the most attractive quarters were occupied by European officials and by the European and Chinese commercial groups who flourished under the French colonial regime. Today, these groups have gone; their houses have been broken up into apartments for the working people of Hanoi—the clerks and the shop assistants and the mechanics—whose families and dependents spill out into temporary housing in the palm-shaded gardens.

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In the past, as the administrative center of a colonial regime, it was characterized by a great development of luxury trades and activities: it was a city largely parasitic on the countryside. Today, it is the economic centre of a developing Asian state. The old luxury trades are vanishing and are being replaced by the workshops and factories turning out the consumer goods and capital equipment so desperately needed by the masses of Vietnam. It is a city in which the old world and the new world struggling to be born are sharply juxtaposed: the new machine tool factory is full of gleaming Russian machinery, and in its grounds women carry the scrap iron in the traditional peasant baskets and cut the grass of the verges with the tiny peasant knife.

Parallel 17 North

North Vietnam has an area (63,000 sq. miles) rather larger than that of Wisconsin and a population of 13 millions. It came into being after a savage and protracted colonial war, of which I saw glimpses in a Vietnamese film in Hanoi. This war for colonial freedom became involved in the cold-war politics of the great powers and brought the West to the brink of atomic intervention when the campaign began to swing decisively against the French. It was terminated by the Geneva Agreement which shattered, temporarily at least, the unity of the Vietnamese lands along the arbitrary line of the 17th parallel. The Agreement provided for elections in 1956; these might have restored the unity of North and South, but, largely owing to the opposition of the American-supported Diem regime in South Vietnam, they were never held. Today, the 17th parallel is one of the most absolute barriers in the world; trade or movement across it is non-existent, and even postal contact between members of families divided by the boundary is restricted to prisoner-of-war type postcards. The division shattered the economy of Vietnam, leaving a food-deficient, mineral-rich North cut off from a food-surplus, mineral-deficient South. The South subsequently evolved under American control; the North aligned itself with the socialist camp and followed the Chinese pattern of agrarian reform and social transformation.

The Emergence of a New Society

Today, North Vietnam is at the stage of economic and social development reached by China in the early 1950s. When the French

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withdrew, the government took over the banks, the railways, most large-scale enterprises, and foreign trade. A sizeable private sector still remains: at the end of 1957, for example, the private, non-socialist sector still accounted for four fifths of the output value of industry and handicrafts, seven tenths of the retail trade, and almost one half of the wholesale trade. The size of the state sector is, however, increasing as a result of the steady expansion of the lower forms of state capitalism; thus, many private firms process products for the state, or are sales agents for the state trading concerns.

Land reform, following the Chinese pattern, gave some 2.2 million acres to the peasants and was followed by the development of agricultural cooperatives. By November 1958, over half of the peasant households had joined cooperatives; they are small by comparison with those of China (one visited near Hanoi consisted of 28 households, cultivating 31 *mou* of land: a *mou* is 0.1647 acres), but by pooling land, work animals, and implements and thus overcoming the problems presented by the excessive fragmentation of holdings, they have made a significant contribution to expanding agricultural output.

Reshaping the Economy

The partition of the Vietnamese lands created a major food problem for the North. Tonkin, the heart of North Vietnam, had always been a food-deficit area, its needs being supplied by the more sparsely peopled South. Partition made this northward flow of rice impossible, and in the first year or so of its existence the new state survived only as a result of food grains sent by China and the USSR. Then agrarian reform, coupled with improved cropping techniques modeled on those of China, gradually boosted output. The landlords had formerly taken one quarter of the entire output; with the land reform these 625,000 tons of rice went to swell the peasants' larder. By 1957 rice production had increased sufficiently to meet the needs of the country's growing population; per capita consumption was one third above that of 1939 and there was a small surplus of some 80,000 tons for export. Output of other food crops—cassava, sweet potatoes, and peanuts—and of industrial crops such as cotton increased even more strikingly. Meanwhile, large-scale irrigation and flood control schemes are being undertaken. The most striking of these is the Bac Hung Hai scheme near Hanoi; this was planned by Chinese and Soviet experts and will be completed in

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the middle of this year. It covers an area of half a million acres, with a population of over a million peasants, and is being carried out almost entirely by the hand labor of 20,000 peasants and 12,000 soldiers of the Vietnamese army.

This agricultural development is paralleled by industrial development. Under the French, industry, including handicrafts, represented only ten percent of the total value output of the economy; by 1960 this will have risen to 35 percent. Industrial development is less advanced than in China, but the foundations have been laid, not only in the shape of factories producing consumer goods such as cloth or matches, but also in more basic industries such as machine tool production. The biggest enterprise visited was the Xuong Co Khi machine tool plant in Hanoi; this was built and equipped by the USSR and now employs a thousand workers. It produces machine tools, lathes, planing machines, and spare parts for other factories, and its construction marks the beginning of heavy industry in North Vietnam. The country has the resources—coal and metallic minerals—for a considerable development of heavy industry; at the present moment one of the major bottlenecks is the shortage of trained personnel, a shortage being overcome by sending local workers to other countries of the socialist camp for training or by means of local training schemes run by Soviet technicians.

Under the Three Year Development Plan (1958-1960), 96 capital construction projects are being undertaken: these include an integrated iron and steel works, machinery, and agricultural machinery works, and represent a further step forward in the government's policy of diversifying and broadening the economy of North Vietnam.

Aid from the Sino-Soviet bloc has played an important role in the country's reconstruction. It has, however, been on a much more modest scale than American aid to South Vietnam (about one quarter as large), and whereas almost four fifths of American aid to the South has been military or paramilitary in character, the aid the North has received from the Sino-Soviet bloc has been almost entirely economic, taking the shape of capital equipment, even entire factories, or of technical assistance in the development of industry.

Half a Hundred Minority Groups

Like China, Vietnam is a country with many minority peoples. The major group—the Annamese—are rice-growing peoples living

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in the alluvial lowlands. There are, in addition, some 50 to 60 different tribal groups living in the hill areas which fringe the Red River lowlands. Many of these groups have languages, histories, and social systems quite different from those of the Annamese, and to weld them into a unified state without destroying their individuality poses major problems. Vietnam's minority policy is based on that of China; it provides for full development of these peoples and recognizes their individuality by granting a considerable measure of administrative autonomy to the larger and more compact groups. Research into the history and social organization of the tribal peoples is carried on by the School of National Minorities at Hanoi. Here new scripts are being developed for groups with no written language, and minority students are trained to go back and work as administrators, teachers, and technicians among their own people. The School includes a large number of pupils from South Vietnam who, when unification of North and South comes, will provide a core of trained personnel for the tribal groups in the uplands of the South.

Fifty Years of Struggle

The new state has been created largely by the struggles of one man—Ho Chi Minh, known affectionately to the peasants as "Uncle Ho." Ho Chi Minh provided the leadership in the long struggle against French colonialism and forged a new unity of the Vietnamese people in the wartorn jungles and paddy fields of the North. It was difficult to realize that this quiet-spoken scholar spent forty years of his life in either underground resistance work or open warfare against the Japanese and French. In Vietnamese films of the resistance war, I had seen the President sharing the wartime sufferings of his people, the dedicated, infinitely patient leader of an Asian revolution. Meeting him in the early sunshine of a November morning I saw another aspect of his personality—a gentleness and warm humanity which rose above past bitternesses and the narrownesses of fanatical nationalism. I left with the impression of a very great man, who combined in his person the gentleness and warmheartedness of these people and the toughness and determination which carried them through many years of war and which sustains them in their long uphill struggle to rebuild their economy and reunite their divided country.

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WHITHER AMERICAN LABOR?

BY K. M. ANGELL

The American labor movement (and thus the American Left and the world at large) owes the editors of the *American Socialist* and the *Monthly Review* an enormous debt for having sponsored and published *American Labor in Midpassage,* (Monthly Review Press, New York, 1959, $3.50) edited by Bert Cochran. Hopefully, it is a sign of many good things—new stirrings in the American Left, and labor, and a return to sufficient balance to probe once again the important issues of our day. The eleven authors are drawn from the labor movement, academia, and the socialist movement.

In a brief hundred and ninety well-written pages, the authors have given us new and accurate insights into American labor history, the true condition of the American worker's standard of living, automation, women and Negroes in the labor force and in unions, the white collar worker, corruption, politics, and culture. The tone and outlook of each author is positive and refreshing, although an occasional note of bitterness, so characteristic of the Left (and understandable), does creep in. Fortunately, all of the contributions are free from the "industrial relations" approach that has stultified so much academic work in this field.

First, a brief word about each of the essays, and then several generalizations about basic themes and omissions that concern the whole volume. Paul Sweezy's short article on "The Condition of the Working Class" makes effective use of official statistics to debunk the commonly held view that American workers as a class have been the chief beneficiaries of the inflation and are living in the lap of luxury. He shows that the major gain in real earnings for American labor took place during World War II when wage raises, upgrading, and especially time and a half for the last eight hours of the then common 48 hour week, combined with price control to make real weekly earnings jump. But after the war *it wasn't until 1955 that average real weekly earnings climbed back to their 1944-45 peak*—in

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spite of shrewd bargaining by bread-and-butter leaders, numerous strikes, an 18-million strong labor movement, several overwhelming Democratic victories at the polls, and in spite of continued prosperity. Sweezy's analysis, beautiful as it is, just whets our appetite. We need more, and in greater detail. Obviously, many workers protected by seniority and in oligopoly industries, have achieved relatively fabulous earnings. But apparently these high earners have been balanced by many, many low earners.

The major gains in family living standards have resulted, not so much from higher earnings by the "breadwinner," as from secondary and tertiary earners entering the labor market (or the breadwinner taking second jobs that certainly do not pay time and a half). In many instances this has been a high price to pay for homes, autos, and appliances, as several other essays point out. In recent years the total number of males over 25 in the labor force has remained constant, almost the entire increase in the labor force resulting from women entering—a *net* increase of over 600,000 a year.

Thus, Sweezy's contribution, and many of the others too, raises a basic question: just how productive is capitalism? When an increasing pie (increasing in real terms at about 3 percent per year) has to be divided up among a rapidly increasing labor force, there isn't much more for each of us. When the labor force increase is largely working wives and mothers, numerous social and personal costs offset the increase (child care, clothing, transportation, eating out, and so on). Moreover, so much of the increase, as Professor Dowd points out in his essay "The White Collar Worker," is dissipated in increased advertising, insurance, service charges for time-payments, and other non-productive white collar pursuits, that not much is left to divide. Lack of planning, under-utilization of capacity, deliberate style and product obsolescence, high rewards for speculative pursuits instead of research and productive pursuits—all these and many other factors add up to a productive mechanism that is progressing, but at a snail's pace. Galbraith's "Affluent Society" has little meaning for the family where the wife is home tending to three young children, while the man is earning the *average manufacturing wage* of about $4800 a year (*before* taxes), if he is lucky enough to work year-round.

Thus, the usual contradiction that confronts the American Left is with us once again, but without a conclusion. That is, the American standard of living is high, but damn it, not *that* high. Harvey Swados' "A Note on Cultural Exploitation," again develops this theme: sure

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the standard of living is high, but at what price glory? At the price of intellectual and cultural impoverishment; at the price of dehumanization; at the price of Charley Chaplin's human robot. Although we all share Swados' concerns, and can see this deprivation all about us (and within us too), nevertheless there are positive aspects which he tends to overlook. Many workers have retained a deep and abiding faith in workmanship and in their own abilities to mold nature. They have been forced to retain this faith to remain sane, to remain true to themselves, to get by in a demanding world, and because they see the shams and hypocrisies that are practiced daily in the name of "free enterprise." Thus a deep and sincere comradeship has developed in most industries—even in the individualistic building trades. Witness the enormous numbers of houses that are built on a semi-cooperative basis by the building tradesmen for each other, and for speculation too. Despite hurdles thrown up by all sorts of vested interests, the building trades craftsmen build for themselves—to make an extra buck, or to get a better house for their families. This can be viewed as just another expression of our cultural desert (after working 1½ jobs, the carpenters or plumbers or bricklayers are hardly interested in Thoreau). But the American worker is trying to cut himself in on the better home and the better life he knows is his, and his family's, due. To accomplish this he usually has to beat the Madison Avenue bunch, and the thousands of little Madison Avenuers all over the United States. Generally, he finds he has to rely on his own workmanship, and the workmanship of other workers. The merchant, the advertiser, the finance clerk, the discount house, the banker, the auto salesman—all these cannot be trusted—and the worker knows this far better than Swados, Galbraith, or myself.

Leo Huberman's essay "No More Class War?" repeats, in a most effective manner, testimony that proves class war in the United States is hardly passé. But is this the real issue? Wouldn't it be more apropos to attempt to define the specific nature of this class war—or, more accurately the many facets of the class war? Also different industries, different unions, different locales show different expressions of class conflict, and it takes various forms under various circumstances. Class war is hardly a thing of the past, but it is also an ever changing, multidimensional force which, elusive though it is, can provide us with a necessary guide to an understanding of the American labor movement.

In "Labor and Politics," Harry Braverman provides an excellent and accurate review of labor participation in politics since the early

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1920s. Here, once again, an ancient socialist contradiction rears its ugly head—the workers are more radical, more class conscious than usually supposed, *but* there is no outlet or vehicle for these feelings. The blame is placed largely on the shoulders of conservative union leaders and shrewd politicians. Why is the American Left not as shrewd? Despite the unproductiveness of these wailings, Braverman has put his finger on the key fact—a real qualitative-quantitative alteration in labor's political role has taken place in the past twenty years. The increased political activity thrust upon business unionism by the Taft-Hartley decade has resulted in basic change. Radicals saw this potential with CIO-PAC; the red-hunt buried it temporarily; the employer offensive has reactivated it at a higher and even more effective level. Although Braverman is inclined to be disdainful of local labor participation, this is precisely the stuff out of which long-run, national and international gains will be made. So once again, the dialectic could operate in a strange manner. Meany is undoubtedly sincere when he pleads with the NAM and with top business leaders. ("For our part, I personally would prefer that there be no political activity on the part of labor. . . . We didn't make the decision to go into the political field; the employers made it for us. We have organized our membership along political lines in self defense and we are going to be just as active politically as it is necessary for us to be." *Dun's Review,* April 1959). But Meany, the NAM, and the Chamber of Commerce might be unable to control the monster they have unleashed—which Braverman correctly describes as the monster of democratically controlled local political machines. Even if the tradition of autocracy and unity pervades union organization, the American-born, high school graduates who now dominate union membership, truly believe in (so do their sisters and their cousins and their aunts) (1) political democracy, (2) a high standard of living in the United States, (3) equal opportunity for their children. Braverman has forcefully focused on the positive aspects of labor participation in politics but has left us in the dark as to where it is likely to lead. In view of history, he is properly cautious, but some speculation about the future might have been in order.

With William Glazier's piece on "The Automation Problem," we once again return to the productivity and progress aspects of the American economy, but this time coupled with timely warnings of many of the implications to unionism. The pace of automation is great and growing; most areas of automation are being kept "clean" of

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unionism, which is therefore in danger of finding itself increasingly confined to relatively unproductive, poor-bargaining, and shrinking industries. Glazier poses the main problem in this area as the problem of the business unionist—how to get the benefits of automation into the hands of the workers. He predicts that if the economy "declines or falters," then the burdens of automation will truly tax labor's resourcefulness. But isn't there a more fundamental problem for socialists to face: can capitalism ever utilize automation properly? Can the materialistic, sales-happy economy focus on the enormous productivity which can come from research and development in the next half-century? The fabled American standard of living is now truly within grasp, and without the demeaning cultural impoverishment described by Swados. Productivity and plenty can now be coupled with progress and integrity—but can capitalism do it? The dreams of Bellamy, Hillquit, Debs, DeLeon, George, and millions of others, can now be realized. But we return to the pervasive question, can we organize this society to achieve these goals with peace and prosperity?

The essay on "Women at Work" by Nancy Reeves reminds us, in a quiet tone and with the forceful understatement that results from careful use of statistics, of the shocking use and misuse of women in our labor force. In this wealthiest of societies that refuses to recognize immutable social responsibilities, women are deliberately used to destroy work standards, undermine wage rates, and expand production through an increase in the labor force (at great personal and social cost). Most unions, as Nancy Reeves stresses, give lip service to equal pay for equal work, but do pitifully little about it. She calls for sincere and effective campaigns within the unions themselves. Perhaps a more effective, specific issue would be for equal representation! Even in unions whose membership is predominantly women—such as the ILGWU and the Amalgamated—there is only token "Uncle Tom" (or Auntie Mame) representation. As Miss Reeves points out, the problems of women and the minority groups are not dissimilar, and the fight for equal rights may, in the short and long run, be of overwhelming importance to those interested in unions, in socialism, in peace, and in a better life. There are indications that those doubly exploited—women in minority groups—are pointing the way.

The colloquy on "The Negro and the Union" by an AFL-CIO staff member presents in sharp relief the apparent contradictions between principle and expediency; between publicity reform (making a good show) and effective reform; between passing resolutions for the

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record and basic organization and real education. Obviously these issues far transcend the problem of equal rights, but this is probably the best of all possible grounds upon which to focus on the problem. The resolution, devoutly hoped for by the author, and conscientiously withheld so the reader must arrive at it for himself, is that *the principled position is the truly expedient one—the only one that will lead to success.* All other seemingly expedient paths will prove to be blind alleys. Only effective mass organization will bring lasting returns. There is the timely reminder by both Mr. Morgan and Mr. Cochran that President Roosevelt "capitulated" and issued the war-time FEPC (Executive Order 8802) only under the threat of mass action. But this reminder still begs the question. The threat of mass action was needed to get wartime FEPC, but wasn't President Roosevelt also needed? Granted Roosevelt has been given too much credit, and the March-On-Washington Committee too little credit, still weren't both parties to the deed? Would a Republican President have issued the order? And if he would have issued it, would the administration have been as effective? This poses the crux of the question that has plagued the American Left—what is the stuff out of which social change is made? Stick to mass action and principle, and let expediency and palliatives be damned? Or is it the shrewd handling of movements and politicians that is required? Take your pick—is it the Debses, Altgelds, Haywoods, or is it the Roosevelts, the Gomperses, the Reuthers? Perhaps Mr. Morgan's hopes, as I read them, are correct, that the two must go together today, that we can't have one without the other. It will either be reform *and principle* or neither!

Dennis Anderson's excellent chapter on "Corruption and Racketeering" places the McClellan Committee Hearings in its proper historical perspective and exposes the inconsistencies and ineffectiveness of the AFL-CIO handling of this matter. Membership participation and control are obviously the best answer, but it is an answer that is almost as unpalatable to many labor leaders as it is to Senator McClellan. Mr. Anderson insists on lumping the $50,000 a year labor leader in the same boat as the racketeer, but is this correct? We can condemn John L. Lewis' high salary and expenses, but it is difficult to accept a category that throws him in with Beck and Cross and Ryan. There is a difference, and a very important one. Another point that Mr. Anderson overlooks is that the American employers, particularly the second and third generation softies, have needed rough-and-tumble "go betweens." The men and women who do the work, who take the risks,

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who are on the production line must be tough (outwardly) to survive. The fancy-pants industrial relations boys can fill out the blanks and ask questions, but they obviously seldom, if ever, know the real score. The old minority-group labor bosses, who used to fulfill this function, have often been replaced by thugs and gangsters (the most widely publicized use of them was by Henry Ford); and industry knows that it is cheaper (for it) to deal with the underworld than with the idealists. Here again, the implications and ramifications for production, peace, and plenty abound. Obviously, all kinds of compromises exist and persist. Meany and Hoffa discipline "their" men for a price, and often that price is not too steep, considering the service. But there is always the danger that the price will go sky high, or that an organization like a union will take itself too seriously.

The basic questions on American labor, American society, and world affairs are thoughtfully discussed in the excellent bibliographical summary by Herreshoff, and in the inclusive essays by the editor, Bert Cochran, that open and close the volume. Cochran's summary of labor's reaction to the past seven decades is admirable, by far the best short summary in print. However, several questions arise. Is the triumph of business unionism as complete as Cochran and Herreshoff conclude? Or, to put it another way, is business unionism as limited as most labor theorists believe? Actually, there are innumerable examples of pools of radicalism, populism, racketeerism, liberalism, that persist and are far more important than is usually recognized. Scratch the skin of a business unionist and one uncovers healthy skepticism, or deep cynicism, or genuine militancy. Throughout the movement, every labor leader and organization must be successful in its business aspects (to stay in business, shall we say), but innumerable locals, and even internationals, do not restrict themselves to narrow business unionism, despite great pressure and temptations to do so.

Looking ahead, Cochran is willing to admit the possibility of a stable and prosperous American capitalism (although not necessarily a peaceful one) but dismisses its probability in a sentence. He thinks it far more likely that tensions arising from the economic, political, and social arenas, will lead to "disillusionment and exasperation" and ultimately to political convulsion. Out of all this turbulence, the best that can be hoped for, writes Cochran, is a "mildly socialistic or British Labor Party type of program" that will ensure economic growth and reorient our foreign relationships.

All this straining to give birth to this mouse? Cochran predicts

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the turmoil of the coming decade on five major points: 1) An annual 3½ to 4 percent rise in productivity in the last decade (on a *per capita* basis it has actually been closer to 1½ percent) as "against a possible 2½ percent rise in hourly wages"; 2) the tendency of our economy to stagnate, despite 15 percent of our national income going into a war budget; 3) competition with the Soviets, whose economy is growing much faster than is ours; 4) "the strategy of the United States to maintain the imperial system in the face of a burgeoning nationalism in Asia and Africa [and America]"; 5) the cold war.

Cochran here puts his finger on the heart of the matter. The future of American labor depends on the future of American capitalism (and also, to a large degree, vice versa). Despite the "American Century," and a decade of prosperity, the future of American capitalism is hardly rosy. The problems are still those of depression, growth, communism, imperialism, and peace. Cochran is satisfied that the reform emphasis of the labor movement will have its hands full accomplishing (1) full acceptance of the liberal Keynes position on depressions and growth and government intervention; (2) a true rapprochement of some kind with the Soviets. Any way you look at it, the issues are still "Peace and Prosperity." And this is a mighty big order, although hardly the usual "pie in the sky" often associated with socialist movements. But the question remains: are even these modest and realistic aims achievable under capitalism?

The issues raised by this fundamental question are far beyond the scope of a short review article, but the economist provides us with one frame of reference within which to begin to approach an answer. Briefly, at the same time that Poland and the Soviet Union are rediscovering the usefulness of the market system (prices) to help allocate resources, we may be observing the breakdown of the market system under capitalism—not because we are "affluent," but because the price system, left to itself, tends to distort and choke the economy and to heighten enormously the underlying contradictions of capitalism. For example:

(1) We are saving at a huge rate (corporate saving, insurance, pension funds, bank and savings deposits, and so on), but an exceptionally small portion of this savings finds its way into truly productive use. Most of it has been going into speculative ventures, stocks, real estate.

(2) One of the seemingly best and growing outlets for capital is foreign investment, and this does often take the form of real capital

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investment—but then it raises a host of new problems. The foreign worker's productivity rises rapidly and his standard of living not quite so rapidly. He becomes a better customer for United States exports, but also competes more effectively with United States workers. Rates of growth of United States industry and resource development slow down, profit returns from foreign investments mount, the rate of increase in United States job formation slows down.

(3) Research and development cry out for our best brains and talent, but the market mechanism decrees that the highest rewards are still to be held out to those who unlock the sales door, not the door to knowledge. Our entire reward and incentive structure, coupled with capitalism's value structure, means that Jonas Salk will never replace Mickey Mantle on bubble gum trading cards.

(4) Rational use of new inventions becomes ever more difficult in a monopoly-encrusted economy—witness the distortions and wastes that have accompanied development of the automobile. These wastes are not restricted only to the auto industry, important as it is, but engulf petroleum, rubber, steel, real estate, city and county government, road building, and so on almost *ad infinitum*. And yet in many ways conservative economists are correct—the consumer *is* king under capitalism, the market rules. This is one of capitalism's great strengths, but it is also one of its great wastes and weaknesses. It may still be a more efficient and satisfying way of charting "progress" than through bureaucratic mazes, but there must be better ways.

(5) The traditional problems of depression and war are still far from solved, as we all are too well aware. The three postwar recessions have hardly yet provided a test of the effectiveness of the Keynesian policies; a real test is likely to come in the next decade. In general it can be said that remarkably little thinking has been done to explore the effects of Keynesian policies on the basic capitalist contradictions—it certainly dampens some, but it also heightens others.

Finally, on the world front, it is somewhat disconcerting to have Cochran treat the American labor movement as just a couple of steps behind the British. This Laskiism was thin, even years ago, and today it is even thinner. There are differences between the two movements and the American does not always come off second best by comparison, although this is certainly not the issue. The American movement is much likelier to be more militant in a real economic crisis, for example; but it is also likely to be much less

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of a bulwark against fascism, the threat of which Cochran tends to underplay.

However, on the overhanging issue of the day (the year, the decade, the half century?)—war—both labor movements have been singularly weak. Until the second international makes its peace with the Soviets (or vice versa), or until labor realizes that the only truly "patriotic" foreign policy position for it to adopt is one that is completely independent of its "own" government, it is unlikely that either the British or the American labor movement will be able to exercise constructive leadership for peace. Theirs has not been a narrow nation-state nationalism, it has been a narrow and blind capitalist nationalism, which the Soviet Union and various Communist Parties have helped foster. As long as this kind of situation continues, the hopes for peace will continue to rest with the representatives of Imperial Chemical, Schroder Bank, and Wall Street. No independent labor action will be forthcoming, and what a great tragedy that is!

Here again, to be sure, there are some silver linings to this overwhelmingly depressing cloud: some new groupings are appearing in Europe, and the Afro-Asian-Latin American nations show great stirrings. Perhaps it will not be too little and too late. The white man may still be saved by the non-white, assuming the white man gives him enough time.

If three hours with this volume can give rise to so many speculations on the part of a stodgy academe, obviously this is a book everyone must read. The market place must not be an obstacle to the widest circulation and discussion of this vital and competent work.

Not in Utopia, subterranean fields,
Or in some secret island,
Heaven knows where!
But in the very world,
which is the world
Of all of us, the place
where in the end
We find our happiness or
not at all!
—Wordsworth

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WORLD EVENTS

By Scott Nearing

Changes In and Around Berlin

There is a saying which is being applied to the current Berlin crisis as it was applied to the Taiwan crisis in 1958, the Suez crisis in 1956, and to other vortices of social change: "The more it changes the more it remains the same." The aphorism is intended to reassure the timid and to bolster the morale of conservatives and reactionaries. It is another way of saying that before, during, and after the crisis similarities will continue to outweigh the differences, making the temporary organization of human affairs virtually permanent.

Actually, of course, the situation is never exactly the same at any two points on the time-scale. On the contrary, it changes constantly underneath the surface appearance of sameness. This has been true, notably, of Berlin.

Bismarck, consolidating a number of the German-speaking states under the leadership of Prussia, established a state which became the chief European rival of the world-dominant British Empire. Berlin was the capital city of an empire which extended its controls over economic and political affairs beyond the borders of Europe into Asia, Africa, the Pacific Islands, and the Americas. During the fateful years at the turn of the century, German industry, commerce, and finance, coupled with German diplomacy and backed by the German armed forces, were the runners-up of British industry, commerce, finance, diplomacy, and armed might. War, breaking out in July, 1914, was one aspect of the world power line-up: the Allies, under the leadership of London, versus the Central Powers, led by Berlin.

At this stage in its recent history, Berlin bespoke the interests of a power-bloc dissatisfied with British world leadership and consumed with ambition to transfer the mantle of world authority from London to Berlin.

All of the chief European powers were weakened by the 1914-1918 struggle. At war's end Berlin was defeated, humiliated, disarmed, and saddled with a crushing war indemnity, payable in installments to the victors in the epochal conflict.

Long before the power-shift from a German monarchy to the

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Weimar Republic of 1919, Berlin had been the scene of another momentous conflict—the struggle between capitalism and socialism. German socialism won political power in 1919 and after a brief internal struggle between Right and Left, decided to coexist with German capitalism and await the inevitable and gradual transformation of capitalist Germany into a socialist Germany. Fourteen years later an unexpected transformation was consummated, under Hitler and his Nazi following. Berlin had become the capital of a new power which, its leaders said, was to endure for a thousand years. Its end came twelve years later during a war of machines waged with unparalleled fury and the full destructive power of science and technology.

Berlin, capital of the Nazi power, was left a shambles of rubble and desolation. Under the Potsdam Agreement, not only were arms forbidden to Germany, but the capacity to produce military machines was also denied. Four victorious powers occupied Germany militarily and administered it from Berlin. In the course of this occupation Germany was divided into an East part with its capital in Berlin, and a West part with its capital in Bonn. Berlin itself, located a hundred miles from the West German frontier in East Germany, was divided into an East Zone and a West Zone. With most of the rubble cleared away and a large proportion of the city rebuilt, Berlin is divided today.

Berlin has changed and changed again during the three generations since Bismarck's day. Has it remained the same? By no means. For a period that ended in 1914, Berlin and the civilization of which it was an expression, seemed stable, secure, permanent. Out of a generation of tumultuous change Berlin has emerged, a city in unstable equilibrium, divided between two power blocs, a victim of hot war and a symbol of the cold war. Can it remain in this uneasy, nerve-racking balance? Only so long as the power deadlock continues. If the impasse is broken by a negotiated agreement, Berlin may anticipate unification, order, and respite from conflict. If it is party to another general military conflict, Berlin will be turned once more into a heap of rubble.

In a broad sense, Berlin is a microcosm of western civilization. It has been through two general wars and several minor skirmishes during the past half century. Seldom has its life hung in a balance more precarious than that of today.

Berlin has changed aplenty. Berlin is not the same. There is

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every likelihood that the pattern of its life will continue to change in the immediate future.

Asia-Africa Also Changes

Change has not been confined to Berlin. Recent events in Asia and Africa are moving even more swiftly than in the West.

Twenty years ago European imperialists were making economic and political decisions which determined the political status, the standards of living, and the length of life of a thousand million peoples in Asia and Africa. Within twenty years more than a score of Asian-African peoples have won their independence and are making gallant efforts to determine the conditions of their own lives for themselves. Their paths are not easy. They must deal immediately with semi-starvation, ignorance, and disease. They must provide housing. They must furnish jobs for the unemployed. These are immediate tasks.

Beyond them lie four major problems: the provision of justice and fair dealing between man and man; the wise use and conservation of natural resources; a system of education that will introduce new generations to the world in which they must live; leadership which will inspire whole populations with the hope of betterment and confidence in the possibility of mastering nature and society through a planned, organized, social pattern.

One might wish that peoples who had suffered conquest, occupation, and bitter exploitation at the hands of foreign invaders, would not only be liberated from their servitude, but would be given all possible assistance when they had set out through the gate of independence along the path of self-determination. Alas, the facts are otherwise. Their former imperial masters do everything in their power to prevent the ex-colonials and dependents from getting on their feet.

There is, in England, a Movement for Colonial Freedom (374 Gray's Inn Road, London W.C. 1), chaired by Fenner Brockway, member of the British Parliament. Its *Colonial Freedom News,* published monthly at threepence an issue, describes two divergent and contradictory efforts: on one hand, the revolutionary struggle of the colonials for independence and self-determination; on the other hand, the persistent counter-revolutionary attempts of the former imperial masters to turn back the clock of history by obstructing and hampering the movement for independence and frustrating the attempts at self-determination.

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Colonial Freedom News for July, 1959, describes the African situation thus: "Nothing can stop the advance of the African peoples to political freedom and human equality, and the advance will take place with an increasing tempo and strength. Whether this revolution takes place cooperatively or antagonistically will depend upon the acceptance by the European minorities in Africa and by the governments and peoples of the Colonial Powers."

From Algeria on the north, through Kenya, Nyasaland, and Rhodesia, to the Union of South Africa, the white minorities are making a stand against self-rule for Africans. The battle is joined. The stakes are high. The future of hundreds of millions hangs in the balance. Will Asians and Africans be forced back into colonial servitude to the West or will they continue their advance toward independence and self-determination?

Something New—Socialist Construction

Social change, like changes in other fields, results from the application of imagination, ingenuity, and reason to accumulated knowledge, in an effort to solve problems and attain objectives. Eighteenth century scientists developed, planned, and wrote into law declarations, constitutions, and other legislative acts which set forth theories of governments and provided institutions for their practical application. These experiments drew their inspiration from Greek thinking and followed precedents dating back to the European renaissance. They dealt chiefly with the relations between competing sovereignties and between government and citizens. They entered the field of economics when they took up money, taxation, transportation, and communication.

Paralleling the application of science to political affairs, the 18th and specially the 19th centuries witnessed the introduction of scientific procedures into manufacturing, mining, transportation, communication, power production, insuring, accounting, agriculture, and merchandizing. Acceptance of laissez-faire principles prevented government from taking part in most economic activities.

Twentieth century science, in the name of the general welfare, entered the forbidden field of livelihood along a broad front which included welfare statism on one side and on the other the collective ownership, operation, and administration of all aspects of politics, economics, and social relations by associating public order, livelihood, general welfare, and social improvement in a general social plan.

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Limited social planning dates back to the ancients, who conserved and utilized water, laid out cities, organized states, promoted transportation, navigation, and trade, provided for the common defense, and waged war with increasing use of scientific techniques in limited fields of human endeavor.

Only in the 20th century were these scattered fragments of science and engineering unified in an all-embracing theory and practice which extended, in the Soviet Union, to every aspect of group endeavor on one-sixth of the planet's land mass, and reached forward, in imagination, to a collectivized, coordinated human community across the entire planet.

Scientifically and technically the foundations for one world have been established. Communication, transportation, trade, travel, migration, and cultural exchange across frontiers are among the most outstanding aspects of present-day experience. Political attachment to the sovereign state and ideological dedication to nationalism are barriers, but they are already being crossed.

Movements for a planned, scientifically organized collective human community are old in theory. They have been put into practice, repeatedly, on a small retail scale. Only during the present generation have they been attempted on a wholesale basis.

Forty-two years ago, in November, 1917, the Russian Bolsheviks, under the leadership of Lenin, began the organization of a planned, nationwide collective that stretched across two continents. At that time Russia included considerably less than a tenth of the human race. During the four decades that followed the launching of this bold experiment, a third of mankind has turned from its ancient ways and dedicated itself to the task of building socialism.

Fifty years ago socialist construction was an untried theory. Beginning from scratch in 1917, socialist construction has spread steadily, especially in East Europe and Asia. Today Africa and Latin America are leaning toward socialism. Western clamor over the 1959 Berlin crisis centers around the slogan: "Berlin is in mortal danger. A false step and we will lose the city to the Communists. Keep Berlin free of socialism."

Our Changing World

We have been discussing a widely accepted maxim: "The more things change, the more they remain the same." We have tested out this social aphorism, first in relation to Berlin, because at the moment

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the Berlin crisis is a theme of discussion and controversy. From Berlin we turned first to Asia-Africa and then to the rapidly expanding movement for socialist construction extending across two continents. The facts we have cited point to the conclusion that dynamic forces within present-day society are resulting in changes of sufficient intensity and magnitude to transform or revolutionize our institutions and our way of life.

These forces for change may be grouped under five heads: (1) constructive, creative hunches, ideas, explanations, and generalizations (philosophy); (2) laboratory and field tests and checks of the validity of these hunches, ideas, explanations, and generalizations (science); (3) discovery, invention, and improvement of ways for putting theory into practice (technology); (4) enlarging the practice-area of these procedures from the study and utilization of nature to include the study, control, and direction of human society (socialism); (5) destructive power upgraded to the present point at which one nuclear bomb will do more damage than all of the explosives used from 1939 to 1945 (wars of annihilation).

Here we are dealing with social dynamics—the factors responsible for change, improvement, deterioration, conflict.

Under usual or ordinary conditions, and for short periods, social changes are not too apparent to the unassisted eye. Similarities dominate and reassure. Differences are overlooked, ignored, or deliberately pushed into the background. Hence the maxim "The more it changes, the more it remains the same" can be accepted by shallow thinkers.

Revolutionary situations are different. Their tempo of change is faster. Modifications are more drastic and far reaching. Even in the short run, say the last thirty or forty years, alterations are so obvious and differences so sharp that even the unthinking are made aware of change. This is notably true in a period of easy and rapid communication, when the United States way of life and the Soviet way can run parallel shows in Moscow and New York while the Vice President of the United States tours Siberia and kisses Soviet babies. In such a period even the radio addict and the television devotee learn, through stories and pictures, that there is something new under the sun.

Do not attack the Church, leave it alone; it is the only remaining bulwark against Christianity.

—Lord Melbourne

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SOCIALISM AND THE MAN OF GOOD WILL

BY SAMUEL C. FLORMAN

The following communication is from a man of good will who would like to have socialists answer his questions and resolve his doubts. Readers are invited to respond. We will forward all communications to Mr. Florman and publish any that we judge to be of sufficiently general interest.

—The Editors

Consider the plight of the "man of good will," working diligently at keeping an open mind, trying to keep informed, saddened by the inefficiency and rapacity of our competitive society, frightened by the *deteriorating international situation, willing—indeed, anxious—to* believe that cooperative socialism can provide the framework for a more fulfilling way of life for mankind.

But if he cannot blind himself to the evils of the society in which he lives, even less can he avoid being troubled by gaping holes in the socialist argument. Certain questions fairly cry out for recognition, and these appear to be the very questions that socialists cannot be bothered to discuss.

Are socialists justified in their belief that social solutions can be achieved merely by selecting the right "system"? Is there a system better than all others, just waiting to be tried? Without reference to a specific time and place, the answer has to be "no." No system is either "good" or "bad"—it merely works better or worse in fulfilling the needs of a particular society. Individuals have no absolute duties, any more than they have absolute rights. Each group tries as best it can to provide for social order and personal freedom, for community well-being and individual fulfillment. History shows us societies which have successfully utilized monarchy, oligarchy, theocracy, and dictatorship, as well as others which have had success with varying degrees of democracy and socialism.

It is a little like the chicken and the egg, but essentially the people make the system rather than the other way around. Credit for Russia's successes, for example, rightfully belongs, not to socialism, but to the tenacity, intelligence, and daring of the Russian leaders, and the conscientiousness (or docility, depending on one's point of

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view) of the Russian people. The Russian leaders are following a course which appears to be solving certain problems of *their* time and in *their* place. Other societies with vastly different cultural heritages—and with a less forceful socialist party—might find such a course completely unsuitable.

Competent governments of *both* the Right and the Left have brought material benefits to their societies, while ineffectual and corrupt leaders—including many, many socialists—have failed their people miserably. It is not what one *is* but what one *does* that is of consequence in history.

By this reasoning, one of the things one must do in order to judge the potentialities of socialism in a particular society is to scrutinize the socialists of that society. The results of such scrutiny are not always reassuring.

Since it is not normal to be content with poverty, we might expect to find socialists among the poor. And since the world is a far cry from what any of the holy books would have it be, we might expect to find socialists among the devout. It is also understandable when an economist declares himself a socialist (as in the case of the editors of MONTHLY REVIEW), for he sees opportunities to apply his scientific training in ordering society within a logical framework. This is a question of professional pride.

But what are we to think of the individual who adopts socialism as a means of expressing a neurotic rebellion against life itself? This person embraces mankind but hates men. He loves the proletariat but detests his neighbor; glorifies the peasantry, the Negro, the Asian, the "masses" (with whom he has no contact), and scorns the bourgeoisie who surround him. He demands unlimited freedom for himself and countenances unlimited repression of those who do not think the way he does. Ironically, he would be the first to rebel against a true socialist state.

Even more alarming than the relatively harmless socialist neurotic is his comrade, the socialist opportunist. In democracy, opportunistic politicians serve the purposes of all power blocs and are mere pawns even when they think they are most powerful. In a one-party state, however, the politician's role is radically different. The old revolutionists had aims and aspirations which guided them. They were students of social philosophy, and they had the example of existing social injustice to goad them. But how about the second and third genera-

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tion leaders? How about the "new ruling class," interested primarily in maintaining power, breeding intrigue, nepotism, and corruption? What are the character traits that lend themselves to success in the political maelstrom of a one-party system? What sort of socialist leaders can we expect to arise in "affluent" societies? Compare the founders of the American labor movement with the Dave Becks and Jimmy Hoffas of today. It gives one pause.

And even if a morally responsible world-wide socialist leadership were somehow established, would it not inevitably destroy itself through the corrupting influence of power, as did the medieval Catholic Church?

Further, supposing that the leaders could avoid the pitfalls of corruption, would they not find to their dismay that given absolute power they still could not provide absolute contentment? Would not the people quickly discover that health and security are not all that the human being craves, that in fact man's life is a tragic quest with no radical solution. The "beat" generation, in Russia as well as in the West, gives a hint of the way in which a materially successful society can fail. The ultimate wry jest would be the rejection by future generations of the socialist gift manufactured with present sacrifice. This has been the fate of many a pioneer's legacy.

As members of a society, our first aim is survival—to establish and maintain a form of government that is workable. But as individual philosophers we are constantly making value-judgments, and it is possible that we might treasure socialism as an ideal even if we are convinced that it cannot work in our society. But the socialist dream has a nightmare quality which makes it more disquieting than inspirational.

When all is said and done, we shall all die, our children after us and their children as well. The human race will perish and the planet Earth itself will disappear. Happily, such a prospect has failed to subdue the human spirit. Through natural selection the human species has developed moral codes which have helped it to survive and an aesthetic sense to give life beauty and meaning. We have learned to seek, in John Dewey's terms, what is *satisfactory* rather than what is merely *satisfying*.

Let us imagine that we can look back from some future vantage point and review all the civilizations that have ever been. Which will

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we judge, in retrospect, to have been most *satisfactory?* Periclean Athens, Augustan Rome? Medieval France? Elizabethan England? Renaissance Italy? Each of these societies was plagued by sickness and death, hunger and pain, injustice and cruelty, exploitation and inefficiency. But would we honestly prefer the antiseptic socialist dream society?

Is it *satisfactory* to dedicate one's personal loyalties completely to the state, to inform on one's family for the sake of the "common good"? To sacrifice the treasure of art at the altar of political expediency; to subject education, literature, the press—even science—to the strict control of government interests; to eradicate all traditional concepts of status and substitute a ruthless competition based on "merit" alone? Is it *satisfactory* to relinquish the freedoms which men have learned to tolerate in each other; to attempt to emulate the economic efficiency of the insect world?

And if it be said that these steps are only the necessary temporary prelude to utopia, is it *satisfactory* to suffer present blight for imagined future bliss; to advocate, in Dostoyevsky's words, "general destruction for the sake of ultimate good"?

These are a few of the questions which disturb the "man of good will," even as he is attracted by certain idealistic and practical features of socialism. The socialist, however, shrugs off all such speculation as hostile propaganda. He seems incredibly cocksure and dogmatic in a world where nothing is certain, where even scientific "truths" are constantly being re-evaluated. He seems aggressively morose in a world desperately in need of warmth.

Does he not owe the present a measure of compassion and understanding—and would not his cause seem more attractive graced with a touch of humility, humor, and doubt?

On the press . . .

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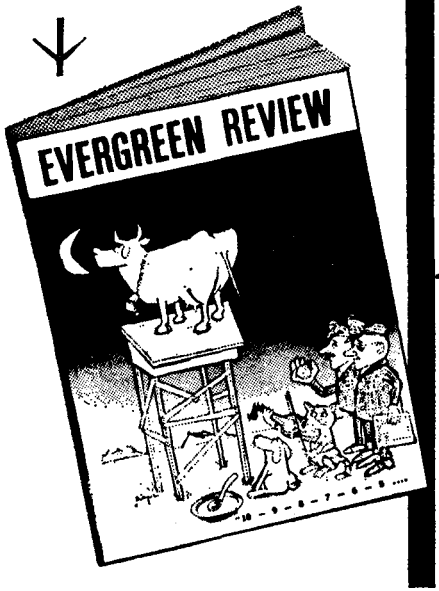

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(*continued from inside front cover*)

Publication date for *Conviction* has now been set for October 7th. Readers will remember that this is the "manifesto" of a group of younger British socialists which won remarkably wide acclaim when it was published in Britain last year. We believe that it deserves the thoughtful attention of everyone on the American Left. Until publication day, the price will be $2.50, after that $4.00. Orders will be filled immediately on receipt.

After *Conviction,* MR Press's next book will be Fritz Pappenheim's *The Alienation of Modern Man: An Interpretation Based on Marx and Tönnies.* This book is now on press and we hope to be able to announce a publication date in our next issue. Meanwhile, we urge you to get your orders in at the special prepublication price of $2.50. After publication date, the price will go up to $4.00.

Most of our mail on the July-August issue has been highly complimentary. Of the individual pieces, Ralph Miliband's "The New Capitalism: A View from Abroad" comes in for special commendation. Our good friend Stephen Fritchman, Minister of the First Unitarian Church in Los Angeles, writes: "The New Capitalism issue is one of your best in years. . . . How I wish I had taken time in London to meet Ralph Miliband—he is about the best thinker you have found in a month of Sundays. Keep his stuff coming. I'll cancel my sub if you drop him." And a subscriber from San Pedro writes in a similar vein: "May I compliment you on an especially fine issue. Ralph Miliband is the greatest—ever since he first appeared in your pages. This to me is lucid thinking and writing." We share our correspondents' high opinion of Ralph Miliband's work and will do our best to ensure that it appears regularly in MR.

Last month in this space we quoted a letter from a young Japanese university graduate who apologized for delay in sending in the money to renew his sub, explaining that $4 is one eighth of his monthly salary. Several generous American readers reacted by sending the money for him, with the result that our Japanese friend now has a paid-up sub for two years and his choice of any three MR Press books.

Recently we received a letter from a charter subscriber who left this country nine years ago and has since lived on a kibbutz in Israel. The sub to MR, he writes, "is my biggest yearly expenditure from my limited means," and his greatest regret is that he cannot afford to buy the books that MR Press publishes. "After reading the announcement of the anniversary sale," he continues, "I decided to put my pride in my pocket and request that if there are readers who are willing to pass on books that they have finished they should mail them to me. I can reciprocate with what is at my disposal—Israeli stamps and my sincerest thanks." The name and address are: Nathan Caspi, Nir Chen, Chevel Lacish, South Israel.

Cheddi Jagan, well known leader of the Peoples Progressive Party in British Guiana, has sent out a letter to many of his friends urging them to subscribe to MR and calling attention to the latest book-subscription combination offers. We would like to suggest that other readers do likewise, and in order to stimulate action we make the following special offer. Tell your friends that if they subscribe to MR through you (or any other old subscriber) they can have their choice of Konni Zilliacus's *A New Birth of Freedom?* or Agnes Smedley's *The Great Road* ABSOLUTELY FREE.

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Just off the press . . . . . Publication date October 7, 1959

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